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SIPDIS

FOR P:U/S GROSSMAN FROM AMB EDELMAN; ALSO FOR EUR/SE

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TAGS: [OVIP](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [MARR](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: UNDER SECRETARY GROSSMAN'S FORCE POSTURE
CONSULTATIONS WITH TURKEY

(U) Classified by Ambassador Eric S. Edelman. Reason: 1.5
(a) and (d).

Summary

11. (S) Welcome back to Turkey. We and the GOT are looking forward to your December 8-9 visit. You will be seeing TGS Deputy Chief Basbug (both TGS Chief Ozkok and DefMin Gonul are traveling), DPM/FM Gul, and MFA U/S Ziyal. You will find the Turks preoccupied with the investigation into the Istanbul bombings and with the upcoming elections in northern Cyprus. Most senior GOT officials are not expecting major changes to our force posture in Turkey, although some continue to believe the US military wants to "punish" Turkey for not supporting our initial military operations against Iraq. Recent meetings of the High Level Defense Group (HLDG--Nov. 17-19 in Williamsburg) and the Economic Partnership Council (EPC--Dec. 1-2 in Washington) helped us get our broad bilateral relationship back on track. Your visit, demonstrating a commitment to consultations and underscoring our continuing commitment to the security of a Europe that includes Turkey, will further underscore that while Iraq remains a priority for both our governments, our relationship is based on broader common interests. Nonetheless, Turks continue to look to the USG to identify areas beyond police training where they can contribute to reconstruction and stabilization. We should also take advantage of your visit to urge the Turks to make the most of the opportunity before May to reach a Cyprus settlement, to reassure them of our commitment to eliminate the PKK/KADEK/KHK threat to Turkey in northern Iraq, to enlist greater Turkish political support on Georgia. On Afghanistan, you should thank the Turks for their continued support for OEF and ISAF operations (including their recent offer of helicopters), encourage them to press Dostum to comply with the ceasefire/heavy weapons cantonment accord, and explore the possibility of the GOT increasing its contributions to ISAF and/or PRTs. Finally, you might compare notes with Ziyal and Gul on our visions for the Istanbul Summit. End summary.

The Setting: After Traveling a Bumpy Road

12. (C) After a year in power, the AK Party government continues to use its overwhelming Parliamentary majority to pursue democratic and political reform, and has its sights firmly set on Turkey's winning eventual accession to the EU. Many within the secular establishment here continue to be suspicious of AK, fearing the party intends to change the role of religion in Turkey; but so far Prime Minister Erdogan has been skillful at forwarding the party's reform agenda in ways and at a pace that avoids provoking a strong reaction from the military or most other conservatives circles. Turkish General Staff Chief General Ozkok in particular has demonstrated a degree of tolerance for change, some of which erode the military's traditional influence, despite opposition within the officer corps. Two years of sound fiscal/monitory policy, the rapid and successful conclusion of the Iraq war, expected US financial assistance, and unprecedented IMF support have combined to bring down inflation and interest rates, restore modest growth, and create some hope that Turkey can work its way out from under an incredibly high public debt burden. However, the government has done little to implement the structural reforms that are essential if this positive momentum is to be maintained, and has hesitated to take advantage of our \$8.5 billion financial assistance, which could save it hundreds of millions of dollars in interest payments. The bombings in Istanbul temporarily set the stock market back, but it quickly recovered, and financial markets in general have been stable. Benefiting from its good performance in government, its clean image, and its lack of competitors that are credible with the public, AK remains highly popular. The

party hopes to cash in on this popularity (and refresh its mandate) during local elections in March. US-Turkish relations have been stabilized at the official level, but the public perception of whether our interests coincide or not and of US purpose in the world have declined considerably. Turkey's leaders portray the relationship publicly in ways that are not always helpful in this regard.

13. (S) Iraq, quite naturally, continues to dominated our bilateral relations. The disappointing March 1 parliamentary vote that prevented our use of Turkish territory for an OIF northern front, the July 4 arrest and interrogation of the 11 Turkish special forces personnel in northern Iraq, and divergent US and Turkish views of Iraqi Kurds strained the relationship. However, determination to improve the situation on both sides has resulted in Turkey's positive contribution to our efforts in Iraq since the war -- humanitarian assistance, participation in reconstruction, trade, and resupply overland to our forces in Iraq. Parliament's approval on October 7 for the GOT to offer troops for Iraq, before passage of UN Security Council resolution 1511 and in the face of significant public opposition, was a further demonstration of the GOT's determination to get our relations back on track and to contribute to our efforts in Iraq. The Turks are looking for us to reciprocate by taking action against PKK/KADEK/KHK in Iraq; S/CT Ambassador Cofer Black's meetings in Ankara on October 2 and subsequent follow up on related issues, such as PRM A/S Dewey's talks here with the Turks and UNHCR on how to deal with the Makhmour refugee camp, are convincing them that we are serious although they still believe military action will be necessary to permanently remove this threat to Turkey, and from Turkey's perspective, the sooner the better.

However, our GOT counterparts continue to stress that any real concrete action short of military action, e.g., arrest and rendition of some senior leaders, would have a major impact on perceptions here.

14. (C) Since the Secretary and Foreign Minister Gul agreed that it was best that Turkey not contribute troops to Iraq at this time, we have been focusing on other ways for Turkey to contribute to Iraq as well as other areas of shared interests and bilateral cooperation. In the wake of our joint decision not to pursue Turkey's offer of troops for Iraq, Turkey continues to look to us to identify areas beyond police training where Turkey can contribute to reconstruction and stabilization efforts. Recently, the HLDG, the EPC and the meetings the Turks had in Washington on the margins, served to accentuate what we can do together to meet common objectives not only in Iraq, but Afghanistan, the Caucasus, and in Europe--including helping Turkey grow its economy, modernize its military, and advance towards its EU membership aspirations. Your visit and your message of continued US commitment to the security of a Europe that includes Turkey will demonstrate we value Turkey as an ally and strategic partner, not only regarding Iraq, but also more broadly. Of course, given your position and history with Turkey, you will be expected to engage on issues beyond force posture with all the senior Turks you meet.

Key Issues

15. (U) In all your meetings, you will want to touch on the following:

(S) Istanbul bombings: Investigation into the four terrorist bombings in Istanbul preoccupies the government, senior officials and the public. We have provided our former consulate building in Istanbul for the use of British investigators, some space in our new facility to UK consular staff to work on visas, and investigatory and intelligence assistance to the Turks. You should offer condolences and ask whether we can do more to help. Your visit to the synagogue in Istanbul will underscore our interest and concern. The Turks are livid about travel warnings and refuse to understand their intent. They are lauding Syrian and Iranian cooperation despite the fact that several suspects fled to these countries and have not been "located."

(C) Turkish Force Posture: Although some Turks believe that the USG--and the US military in particular--wants to "punish" Turkey for not fully supporting the US in the Iraq War by drawing down our presence, most are not expecting any big changes to our base structure in Turkey, and they will be expecting you to confirm this during your consultations. Some Turks suspect that the USG, and the US military in particular, wants to "punish" Turkey for not fully supporting the US in the Iraq War by drawing down our presence. You

might use your consultations to encourage a prompt and positive response to EUCOM's recent request to use Incirlik to rotate up to approximately 1,000 people per day in and out of Iraq between January and April 2004. You may hear about a hope that the DODDS school in Izmir could reopen to accommodate dependents of personnel at AFSOUTH which is to move there, but we have already told the Turks this isn't in the cards and that they must take the lead in attracting an international school to the city. (VCJCS Pace, when presented with this proposal by TGS Deputy Basbug said he would get back to him, so you could simply say General Pace will respond if it is raised with you.) Grumbling about problems with DECA (Defense and Economic Cooperation Agreement) implementation, mainly concerning differing interpretation of the agreement and diminished assistance levels, haven't changed much from your time in Turkey, but we doubt any of the senior people you will meet will raise them.

(C) PKK/KADEK/KHK: TGS Deputy Chief Gen Basbug left Washington with the expectation that VCJCS Gen Pace would be prepared to share a military course of action (COA) against the PKK/KADEK/KHK in Iraq during his December 2-5 visit. However, CENTCOM's proposed COA have not yet been briefed to SecDef, so General Pace was not able to provide much detail on the road ahead. You will need to reaffirm our determination to "use all instruments of statecraft" to eliminate this threat to Turkey, beginning by whittling down the size of the threat through diplomacy, information, and diligent effort to create success stories that will help convince Turkish Kurds in Iraq -- both PKK members and non-members -- that life in Turkey can be better than the lives they left and better than their possible future in Iraq. We will need concrete steps for the President to cite on this when PM Erdogan visits in late January.

(C) Iraq: In the past three weeks, Turkey has signed a trade agreement with Iraqi leaders, and agreed to improve the flow of traffic across the Habur Gate border crossing. It would be useful for you to emphasize the importance of rapid, successful implementation of the promised improvements at Habur. While expressing appreciation for the assistance Turkey has given and continues to provide to the US vis-a-vis Iraq (including the GOT's most recent offer of police trainers), you might also underscore the importance of Ankara resolving Iraq issues directly with the Iraqi leadership.

(C) Cyprus: Ankara understands that the period following the northern Cypriot elections and prior to Cyprus's May 1 accession to the EU will see intense efforts to reach a Cyprus settlement. The Turks are preparing a new proposal to that end, although there are conflicting views within the GOT. TGS and conservative elements in the bureaucracy remain loyal to Denktash and opposed to the Annan plan, so we are skeptical about how helpful the proposal will be. You might probe for a preview of the initiative while underscoring the need to reach a settlement for Turkey to realize its EU ambitions.

(S) Caucasus/Georgia: The AK government has been receiving some (deserved) criticism for its lack of engagement during the Georgian transition. We have indications that the Turks have concluded that the US has no strategy for the region and that it is in Turkey's interests to cut a deal with the Russians. Given Turkey's close ties to Ajara, it is important that Turkey send an unambiguous message of support for Georgia's territorial integrity. You might want to reiterate the USG's strong support for continued development of the East-West Energy Corridor.

(S) Afghanistan: You should express our appreciation for Turkey's continued support for OEF and ISAF operations, including their recent offer to provide helicopters for ISAF. The GOT continues to allow us to conduct OEF-related refueling missions out of Incirlik, and the base serves as the main transit hub for moving Al-Qaeda detainees from Afghanistan to GTMO and back to their countries of origin. Recently, we have seen fragmentary reports suggesting that the Turks may be less than helpful in encouraging Dostum to comply with the cease-fire/heavy weapons cantonment accord. It would be useful to remind your MFA and TGS interlocutors that we are working hard to ensure that all of the different interests in Afghanistan work toward together toward a common objective, and encourage the Turks to use their special relationship with Dostum to press the latter to follow through on his commitments. You should also use your meetings (particularly with Ziyal and Basbug) to explore the idea of Turkey increasing its support for stabilization efforts in Afghanistan. Turkey has already contributed much to the fight against terrorism in Afghanistan and the

rebuilding of the country. Still, there is room for Ankara to do more. MFA already supports Turkey's making a greater contribution to Afghanistan -- both to ISAF and the PRTs; TGS is reluctant to send more troops.

17. (C) Finally, with Gul and Ziyal, you could usefully touch on the Istanbul Summit. We expect Turkey to help make the summit a success by working with us to convince other allies of the need to reorient PfP from Eastern Europe to the Caucasus and Central Asia and to reinvigorate the Mediterranean Dialogue process. The Summit also provides Turkey the opportunity to showcase its progress in democratization, its economic modernization, its western orientation, and its positive contribution to the various regions it borders. Significant achievements on long-standing issues like relations with Armenia, reopening the Ecumenical Patriarchate's school on Hakki, and a Cyprus settlement would ensure Turkey is seen in the best possible light by all.

EDELMAN